



MONROE

Franklin County



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NARRATIVE

Narrative

The Town of Monroe is the smallest town in Franklin County, covering about 12 square miles and named for President James Monroe. It is an isolated town within the Berkshire Hills of western Massachusetts with rugged uplands and an overall terrain that was not enticing to early settlers. During the Colonial years, there was a small native population but only occasional hunters or lumbermen from Rowe, Charlemont or Heath using the town. The native population increased as they were pushed out of more desirable areas by increasing European populations but the limited access to Monroe and its limited resources for farming or water power production tended to slow its development by colonists.

The first permanent settlement appears to have been in 1800 but even by 1830, Monroe had only 265 people, the smallest population in the Connecticut Valley. Residents relied on a strictly agricultural economy and there was only one immigrant, an Irishman, listed in the census of the community in 1855. As late as 1879, Monroe had no formal churches, organized villages or mercantile businesses, but in 1887 there was an explosion of development in Monroe which included the establishment of the James Ramage Paper Company and the construction of the narrow-gauge Hoosac Tunnel & Wilmington. These changes brought increased population and increased immigration, especially of Austrians. The Hoosac opened up the town known as "The Switzerland of America".

There was increased growth around 1900 in the use of hydro-electric power in the whole Deerfield Valley which brought the establishment of four plants along the Deerfield River. The town now lies between Yankee Atomic Electric and Bear Swamp Hydroelectric. Ultimately, however, the drop in the fortunes of the paper mills depressed the industrial activity of Monroe and the town returned to its historical reliance on dairy farming.

In modern times, there has been a gradual development of the recreational potential of the town, including the Monroe State Forest, which is a 4240 acre woodland preserve, and a modest return to lumbering operations.

(Seal supplied by community. Narrative based on information provided by the Massachusetts Historical Commission)



GEOGRAPHY

Location

Northwestern Massachusetts, bordered by Readsboro, Vermont on the north; Rowe on the east; and Florida on the south and west. Monroe is 31 miles northwest of Greenfield, 126 miles northwest of Boston, and 180 miles from New York City.

Total Area: 10.78 sq. miles

Land Area: 10.71 sq. miles

Population: 115

Density: 11 per sq. mile

Climate

(National Climatic Data Center)

(Cummington Hill Station)

Normal temperature in January.....19.9°F

Normal temperature in July.....67.3°F

Normal annual precipitation.....46.0"

U.S.G.S. Topographical Plates

Rowe, North Adams

Regional Planning Agency

Franklin County

Metropolitan Statistical Area

(1993 Definition)



GOVERNMENT

Municipal Offices

Main Number: (413) 424-5272

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Form of Government

Board of Selectmen

Open Town Meeting

Year Incorporated

As a town: 1822

Registered Voters (Secretary of State 1994)

	Number	%	
Total Registered	75		
Democrats	13	17.3	%
Republicans	8	10.7	%
Other parties	0	0.0	%
Unenrolled Voters	54	72.0	%

Legislators

[Senators and Representatives by City and Town](#)



DEMOGRAPHICS

Table DP-1. Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: 2000

Geographic Area: Monroe town, Franklin County, Massachusetts

[For information on confidentiality protection, nonsampling error, and definitions, see text]

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
Total population.....	93	100.0	HISPANIC OR LATINO AND RACE		
SEX AND AGE			Total population.....	93	100.0
Male.....	43	46.2	Hispanic or Latino (of any race).....	-	-
Female.....	50	53.8	Mexican.....	-	-
Under 5 years.....	5	5.4	Puerto Rican.....	-	-
5 to 9 years.....	1	1.1	Cuban.....	-	-
10 to 14 years.....	12	12.9	Other Hispanic or Latino.....	-	-
15 to 19 years.....	9	9.7	Not Hispanic or Latino.....	93	100.0
20 to 24 years.....	4	4.3	White alone.....	93	100.0
25 to 34 years.....	10	10.8	RELATIONSHIP		
35 to 44 years.....	12	12.9	Total population.....	93	100.0
45 to 54 years.....	15	16.1	In households.....	93	100.0
55 to 59 years.....	7	7.5	Householder.....	43	46.2
60 to 64 years.....	2	2.2	Spouse.....	12	12.9
65 to 74 years.....	12	12.9	Child.....	31	33.3
75 to 84 years.....	3	3.2	Own child under 18 years.....	23	24.7
85 years and over.....	1	1.1	Other relatives.....	1	1.1
Median age (years).....	40.8	(X)	Under 18 years.....	-	-
18 years and over.....	70	75.3	Nonrelatives.....	6	6.5
Male.....	31	33.3	Unmarried partner.....	4	4.3
Female.....	39	41.9	In group quarters.....	-	-
21 years and over.....	66	71.0	Institutionalized population.....	-	-
62 years and over.....	18	19.4	Noninstitutionalized population.....	-	-
65 years and over.....	16	17.2	HOUSEHOLD BY TYPE		
Male.....	4	4.3	Total households.....	43	100.0
Female.....	12	12.9	Family households (families).....	24	55.8
RACE			With own children under 18 years.....	14	32.6
One race.....	93	100.0	Married-couple family.....	12	27.9
White.....	93	100.0	With own children under 18 years.....	5	11.6
Black or African American.....	-	-	Female householder, no husband present.....	7	16.3
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	-	-	With own children under 18 years.....	4	9.3
Asian.....	-	-	Nonfamily households.....	19	44.2
Asian Indian.....	-	-	Householder living alone.....	16	37.2
Chinese.....	-	-	Householder 65 years and over.....	6	14.0
Filipino.....	-	-	Households with individuals under 18 years.....	14	32.6
Japanese.....	-	-	Households with individuals 65 years and over.....	13	30.2
Korean.....	-	-	Average household size.....	2.16	(X)
Vietnamese.....	-	-	Average family size.....	2.83	(X)
Other Asian ¹	-	-	HOUSING OCCUPANCY		
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-	Total housing units.....	67	100.0
Native Hawaiian.....	-	-	Occupied housing units.....	43	64.2
Guamanian or Chamorro.....	-	-	Vacant housing units.....	24	35.8
Samoa.....	-	-	For seasonal, recreational, or		
Other Pacific Islander ²	-	-	occasional use.....	1	1.5
Some other race.....	-	-	Homeowner vacancy rate (percent).....	6.3	(X)
Two or more races.....	-	-	Rental vacancy rate (percent).....	13.3	(X)
<i>Race alone or in combination with one</i>			HOUSING TENURE		
<i>or more other races: ³</i>			Occupied housing units.....	43	100.0
White.....	93	100.0	Owner-occupied housing units.....	30	69.8
Black or African American.....	-	-	Renter-occupied housing units.....	13	30.2
American Indian and Alaska Native.....	-	-	Average household size of owner-occupied units.....	2.33	(X)
Asian.....	-	-	Average household size of renter-occupied units.....	1.77	(X)
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander.....	-	-			
Some other race.....	-	-			

- Represents zero or rounds to zero. (X) Not applicable.

¹ Other Asian alone, or two or more Asian categories.

² Other Pacific Islander alone, or two or more Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander categories.

³ In combination with one or more of the other races listed. The six numbers may add to more than the total population and the six percentages may add to more than 100 percent because individuals may report more than one race.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2000.



HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS

Home Sales (Banker & Tradesman) -

[Town Stats - Free market Statistics](#)

Subsidized Housing Units (DHCD 1998)

[DHCD Subsidized Housing Inventory](#)

Subsidized Housing Units: The number of housing units which count toward the municipality's 10% goal for low- and moderate-income housing. It includes both subsidized affordable units and market rate units in certain eligible subsidized developments.

Public Housing Units (DHCD 1999)

Conventional State: 0
Conventional Federal: 0

Rental Assistance(DHCD 1999)

State (MRVP: 0
Federal (Section 8): 0



TRANSPORTATION

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

The major axes of transportation in Franklin County, where Monroe is located, are State Route 2 and Interstate Route 91, which follows the Connecticut River. The region is well-served by rail. The Springfield Terminal Railway lines (the former Boston and Maine Railroad) parallel the two major highways, and the Central Vermont Railway's main line passes N-S through the eastern portion of the county.

Major Highways

The principal highway serving Monroe is State Route 2, which is accessible in the neighboring town of Florida.

Rail

There is no passenger or freight rail service in Monroe, but the network of intermodal facilities serving Massachusetts is easily accessible.

Bus

Monroe is not affiliated with a regional transit authority.

Other

Harriman & West Airport, a General Aviation (GA) facility located in the neighboring town of North Adams, has a 4,300'x 100' asphalt runway. Instrument approaches available: None.



CULTURE AND RECREATION

LIBRARIES

[Board of Library Commissioners On-line Library Catalog](#)

MUSEUMS

(American Association of Museums)

None

RECREATION

[Telephone Numbers for Public Information](#)

Recreational Facilities (Recreational sites and activities)

[Department of Environmental Management Recreation Section](#)



MISCELLANEOUS

HEALTH FACILITIES

(Dept. of Public Health 1992)

Hospitals

None

Long Term Care

None

Hospices

None

Rest Homes

None

UTILITIES

[Telephone Numbers for Public Utilities](#)

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NOTE: The COMMUNITY PROFILE draws information from a diversity of sources. The main source of information is listed under each section. In some instances comments submitted by the municipality were incorporated to correct and/or enhance the information obtained from the main source. However, no changes were made to those data bases which must be consistent throughout the state. DHCD has made efforts to ensure the accuracy of all data in the COMMUNITY PROFILES, but cannot take responsibility for any consequences arising from the use of the information contained in this document.